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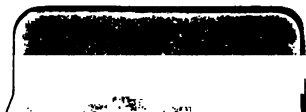
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THE QUIET VISITOR.



THE QUIET VISITOR:

A BOOK
FOR LYING-IN WOMEN.

BY THE
REV. FRANCIS BOURDILLON, M.A.,

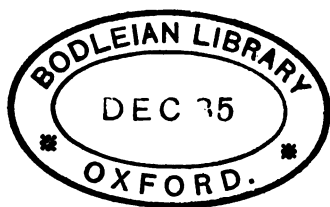
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PREFACE.

AT a very special time, special words, closely adapted to the occasion, are more likely to come home to the heart than words of a more general kind. It is with this view that this little book has been written.

For a few days at least, the minister must keep away, and even a female visitor may scarcely be let in : at this season a little book, such as may be read with hardly any effort, may be welcome and useful.

The first chapter, "Pain and Promise," is meant to be read *before* the birth of the child ; the rest afterwards, from time to time, as strength allows. The book should therefore be given beforehand.

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THE QUIET VISITOR:

A BOOK FOR LYING-IN WOMEN.

INTRODUCTION.



YOU must not have many visitors at present; you must be kept very quiet. But you need not shut the door against *me*, for I am not a common visitor. I do not disturb you by a knock at the door, or a ring at the bell; I come with no heavy tread, I wear no creaking shoes, I speak in no loud voice. You can bear my company; for I will not speak at all. I am only a little book. So you need not disturb yourself to receive me, you need be on no ceremony with me whatever, you may take me up and lay me down just as you please, and I shall not be offended; and I am very light to hold, and my print is large and clear, just fit for you now.

I shall do you no harm therefore. On the contrary, I hope to do you good. It is for that I am sent to you. I come to help and comfort you ; to bring you good thoughts ; to remind you of God, and of His kindness and love. I come to you with some of His gracious messages. I come on purpose to be with you as your companion. I do not visit the strong and well. I come to *you*, as a quiet visitor, at this your time of weakness, when you are much alone.

Take me in hand now and then, when you feel strong enough, and read a few of my words. If too weak even for that, get some friend to sit by you, and read a page to you in a low and gentle tone. You will not find that too much for you.

My first chapter, on "Pain and Promise," is meant to be read *before* your time of trouble arrives ; the rest afterwards, according as you feel able.



CHAPTER I.

PAIN AND PROMISE.

THE Prayer-book speaks of "the great pain and peril of childbirth," and all know that to be a true description. But how comes it that women have to go through this? Whence is it that when a child is born into the world, it is with pain, and even danger to the mother?

We must go back a long way for an answer. We must go back to the 3rd chapter of Genesis. There we find it explained. God said to Eve, the first woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception : in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Gen. iii. 16. That was the punishment for her sin in hearkening to the tempter, and disobeying God. The punishment

has rested on woman ever since. In consequence of the Fall, pain and death entered into the world, and have never since left it; and this special burden was laid upon *woman*, as being first in the transgression, that she should bring forth children in sorrow and pain. This answers the question.

But God is "full of compassion and gracious;" in wrath he remembers mercy: nay, He delighteth in mercy. Turn from Genesis to the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy—part of the same Word of God, though written many hundreds of years after: there we find these words, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." 1 Tim. ii. 13-15.

God, who laid this punishment on woman, here promises help and safety. It was Eve, not Adam, who let herself be deceived by Satan; it was she who was in the transgression; she therefore, and all women after her, must bear the

punishment. Nevertheless God promises that "she shall be *saved* in childbearing," if she seek Him, and trust in Him, and love and follow Him.

"She shall be saved in [or through] childbearing." She shall be brought safely through it. Pain there must be; but God will not forsake her in her trouble, He will help her through all, He will deliver her.

Since the days of Eve what countless numbers of women have found this true! How many have called on God, and he has delivered them! How many, quite ignorant of God and His Word—ungodly, Heathen, savages—have yet been saved through childbirth! Millions and millions of women have received this mercy from God.

Do not think that God will change. Do not give way to fear, as your time draws near. Here stands the word of promise still; nothing can alter it. Lay hold of it in faith. Plead it with God—His own promise. Keep close to Him in prayer, "continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." He will not fail you. He will save *you* in childbearing.

But the word "save" often has a deeper meaning; perhaps it has here. This punishment fell on Eve for *sin*—a special punishment for a special sin; but God says that, notwithstanding that sin and the necessary chastisement for it, yet the woman who has faith shall be *saved*. Not only shall she be brought in safety through childbearing, but her *soul* shall be saved. She must pass through that pain and peril, but it shall not touch her soul, or endanger her spiritual and eternal life. Through that one special trial, as well as through all others, through them all and in spite of them all, the believing woman shall be saved. So God promises; this is His assurance in the Gospel.

Trust in Him for soul and body. Cast yourself afresh upon His mercy in Christ your Saviour. He is the Saviour of the soul, and the Saviour of the body, the unfailing Saviour of all who flee to Him for refuge. Do you flee to Him, and take refuge with Him from every fear. He will receive you. He will save you. Nothing can so calm your mind as a humble and settled trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at these texts :

"The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want.
. I will fear no evil : for Thou art
with me ; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort
me." Ps. xxiii. 1, 4.

"Fear not ; for I have redeemed thee, I have
called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When
thou passest through the waters, I will be with
thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not
overflow thee." Isa. xliii. 1, 2.

"The Eternal God is thy refuge, and under-
neath are the everlasting arms." Deut. xxxiii. 27.

"The sorrows of hell compassed me about ;
the snares of death prevented me. In my distress
I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God ;
He heard my voice out of His temple, and my
cry came before Him, even into His ears."
Ps. xviii. 5, 6.

"Because he hath set his love upon me, there-
fore will I deliver him. He
shall call upon me, and I will answer him : I
will be with him in trouble ; I will deliver him,
and honour him. With long life will I satisfy
him, and shew him my salvation." Ps. xci. 14-16.

Prayer.

O Lord my God, fulfil thy word of promise to me, and save me through my trouble. Even while I pray to Thee, may thy Holy Spirit help my infirmities, and enable me to pray in faith, trusting in Jesus Christ my Saviour and Intercessor.

Help me to fear no evil. Support me through all pain and distress. Deal gently with me thy servant. All through, let me feel that Thou art near.

Preserve me from nervous apprehension. Keep me from mistrust. Give me a spirit of quiet trust. Be Thou my strength. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Lord, bless me and keep me, and give me more than I know how to ask for, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER II.

THANKFULNESS.

GOD has been gracious to you. He has brought you through your trouble. Give Him thanks. It is all you can do at present, or almost all. You cannot get up, and serve Him, and go about His work. You must lie still. But you can lift up your heart to Him and thank Him, while you lie on your bed. There are few better places for praise. For here you are quiet, and can think. Here you have no people coming in to put other thoughts into your head, and wanting this thing and that thing of you. Here you have a quiet time for thanking God.

Thank Him from the *heart*. He loves to see a grateful heart, a heart that feels His goodness. Every fresh gift calls for fresh thanks. He has given you now a fresh gift. He has preserved

your life, and given you a child. Praise Him for His goodness. Do not merely *say* "Thank God!" Sometimes people say the words very lightly, with no feeling or reverence, meaning scarcely anything by what they say. Do you say "Thank God!" but let your *heart* say it, not your lips only. Say it with reverence, remembering *whom* you are thanking; say it with a meaning, thanking Him *really*; say it with feeling—warmly, earnestly, and lovingly.

God will hear you thank Him. Even if you only whisper the words in your heart, He will hear them. And, through Jesus Christ, He will surely accept them. It will *please* Him, to look down and see you lying here with your heart full of gratitude and love.

Think of what you have come through, and say, "Thank God for his preserving care!" Look at your little one, and say, "Thank God for my child!" Count up your many mercies in your thoughts, and say, "Thank God for them all!"

"I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call

upon Him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me." Ps. cxvi. 1-6.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." Ps. ciii. 1-4.

"An offering of a free heart will I give thee, and praise thy name, O Lord, because it is so comfortable; for He hath delivered me out of all my trouble." Ps. liv. 6, 7 (P. B.)

Prayer.

O Lord my God, I thank Thee for thy goodness to me. Thou hast preserved me, and

brought me through my trouble. Thou hast heard my cry, and helped me. And when I was hardly able to cry to Thee, or think of Thee, yet Thou didst remember me. Still be gracious to me, I beseech Thee. For Jesus Christ's sake, look upon me in my weakness, and bless me both in soul and in body. I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies, for I am a sinful creature; but I plead my Saviour's name; I come to Thee by Him; for His sake show me Thy loving favour. Day by day strengthen and comfort me. Sanctify this present time to me by Thy Holy Spirit. Teach my heart while I lie here. Bring to my mind holy and heavenly thoughts. Be near to me, and draw my heart to Thee in gratitude and love. Hear me for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER III.

HELPLESSNESS.

WE are always helpless creatures. At the best of times, in our health and strength, we are helpless, though at such times we do not feel it. But now you do feel your helplessness; for you have lately been more helpless than usual, and are so still. What could you do for yourself, when you knew that your time of trial was come? Nothing. You had just to lie still, and wait, and bear. You could do nothing else. You were quite in God's hands; to deal with you as he saw fit.

He has dealt graciously with you. He has been to you "a very present help in trouble." When you could do nothing for yourself, He sent you help from His Sanctuary; for all the help you have had from others did really come

from Him. God Himself has been your Helper. Thus far He has brought you safely through.

You are still in His hand. You have got through your trouble, but not through your helplessness. You are still very weak. You are forced to let others do things for you. You cannot even sit up in your bed. You want help; man's help, but much more, God's help: that is what you want most.

It is a good thing to feel that. It is good to feel how helpless we are, that we can do nothing of ourselves, but are quite dependent on God. God is teaching you that lesson now.

How happy, at such a time as this, to trust yourself to your heavenly Father; to lie peacefully in his keeping; to think of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, Redeemer, Mediator, and Intercessor, now at the right hand of God on your behalf; and in His name to lift up your heart to God! Can you do this? Have you been used to do so?

Even if not, still draw near to God *now*. Be not afraid. Draw near to Him, in your heart, by Jesus Christ. Now, in your helplessness, cast



yourself on His mercy. He knows you well. He knows all that you have been, and all that you are. He is full of compassion for you ; both for your soul and your body. He always pities the weak and helpless. He never turns away from them, when they humbly seek Him through Jesus Christ. For His sake, God is ready to forgive you all the past, and to take you into His keeping, and to help and bless you in all ways. Be sure of that.

“Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” James iv. 8.

“God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble.” Ps. xlv. 1.

“He shall deliver the needy when he crieth ; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.” Ps. lxxii. 12.

“I am feeble, and sore broken : . . . O my God, be not far from me ; make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.” Ps. xxxviii. 8, 21, 22.

“Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me !” Matt. xv. 25.

“Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not

dismayed, for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isa. xli. 10.

Prayer.

O Lord, I am weak and helpless. I humbly look to Thee. When I was more helpless still, Thou didst think of me, and help me ; even from heaven, thy dwelling-place, Thou didst condescend to look down upon me, a poor helpless woman, and care for me in my time of need. I give Thee grateful thanks. And now I pray Thee to help me still, for still I am in great need of Thy help. Lord, I draw near to Thee according to Thy Word ; do Thou graciously draw near to me. I cast myself upon Thy mercy in Christ Jesus my Saviour. Forgive me and receive me for His sake. Be Thou my Refuge and Strength. Deliver me ; be not far from me ; Lord, help me, and uphold me. Preserve my soul. Keep me from sinning against Thee. Keep me from murmuring and discontent. Humble my heart before Thee. Make

me thankful.. Increase my faith. Help me by Thy Holy Spirit to trust in Thee fully, and to find rest and peace in Thee day by day. I ask all for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER MOUTH TO FEED.

TH E who sends the mouths will send the meat." That is an old saying. It is not from the Bible, but it is according to the Bible. God provides food for all His creatures; "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry;" Ps. cxlvii. 9; "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God;" Luke xii. 6. "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God." Ps. civ. 21. If God provides food for bird and beast, He will not forget man.

It is God who has set men in families, and divided them into households, and made fathers and mothers and children to live together and fare alike. And further, it is God who ordains

that there shall be large families and small families, and settles the number of our children, giving many or few at His good pleasure. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord ; and the fruit of the womb is His reward." Ps. cxxvii.

3. Now, as He provides food for all flesh, He will also divide it among them according as He has placed them. This is only carrying out His own work. He distributes as well as gives.

But He puts it upon *parents* to feed their children. He makes it their duty, and gives them the wish to do it. This wish is natural to them. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father [it applies to a mother too], will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" Luke xi. 11, 12. Now, if God tells parents to feed their children, He will help them to do it. He is no hard Master. He will never expect fathers and mothers to give what they have not got. He will give them food for their children. He sends the mouths, He will send the meat.

You found perhaps plenty of mouths to feed before this one came ; but has not God always given you food for them ? Somehow or other, though not too much, has there not always been *enough* ? God has now given you another mouth to feed. Fear not. He will send food for this one too. He does not change. He who has fed you and yours so long, will not now withhold His hand. One more makes no difference to Him. He has food for all. Be not anxious. Seek your meat from God. When you say "Give us this day our daily bread," you will now be asking for one portion more. Ask in faith. He will give it. He will give this little one its share, and still the others will have enough. You will have to feed them, but God will give you the food. You may not see exactly how ; but God's word for it is enough. Would He give you the child, and withhold the food ? He is far too kind and good for that. Only ask Him, and trust Him, and do your best.

Be sure you *ask*. Our Lord taught us to ask for our bread day by day. Then, even if He should let the beasts want, God will not let you

or your children want. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Ps. xxxiv. 10.

Here are some other encouraging texts :

"The firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety." Isa. xiv. 30.

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys : I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." Isa. xli. 17, 18. Water stands here for all that we want ; for bread as well as water ; and that, not only for the poor and needy themselves, but for their children too ; and as many of them as God sends. God can and will provide, in the most unlikely places, where there seems no hope ; this is like opening rivers in high places, and turning a dry and barren wilderness into a pool of water.

"Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock." Ps.

cvii. 41. And if He *makes* the flock, He will *feed* it ; and every little lamb that he adds to it. The old saying is right and scriptural : " He who sends the mouths will send the meat."

Prayer.

Gracious Lord, Thou hast taught us to ask our daily bread of Thee, and Thou hast never failed to feed me and mine. And now Thou hast given me another child, and I am poor, and I come to Thee for help. Be pleased to send us what we want for this little one. We have nothing but what Thou givest us, but Thou hast never failed us ; of Thy great kindness give us enough for this one too. O Thou Good Shepherd, feed this little lamb. Take it into thy care, watch over it, provide for it ; from its very birth I do humbly commend it to Thee. Thou hast put this child into our charge as its parents : help us to do our duty towards it, and enable us to give it what it needs, now and always. I do seek Thee, O Lord, on behalf of this little one ; fulfil thy word to us, and let us not want any good thing.

And keep us from anxiety. Help us to trust in Thee. May we never doubt. If difficulties come, still help us to keep a firm faith in Thee, and to believe that Thou canst and will help us through.

Hear me, O Lord, for my Saviour's sake.
Amen.



CHAPTER V.

NOT ALONE.

THE nurse has gone downstairs, and now you are all alone—you and your babe ; no one else is near, all is quiet in the room.

You are left alone on purpose ; it is good for you. Perhaps you may get some sleep. If not, you will lie quietly, with nothing to disturb you ; for the child beside you is fast asleep.

It is good for you in more ways than one ; for mind as well as body. Now you can *think* ; not troubled thoughts, but peaceful. And now, with no one near, you can lift up your heart to God in prayer and praise, and fix your mind on a text, or say over a hymn. Try to put away anxiety, and to cast yourself on the tender care of your heavenly Father. Try to have trustful

thoughts towards Him. Ask for the Holy Spirit to calm your mind, and give you peace, and help you to draw near to God. Draw near to Him by the living Way, by Jesus Christ your Mediator and Advocate.

Thus this time all alone will be a most happy time.

I say "alone;" and yet you are not alone. There is Another near, besides you and your child; seeing you both, looking kindly at you; actually present in the room, though unseen. GOD is here.

How wonderful, that the great God of heaven and earth should condescend to visit us! That He who rules the worlds should care for you and your infant, and should at this very moment have His eye on you, and come to you!

Do you really know Him? Do you love Him? Are you one who tries to serve Him in your life? Then it must make you happy to think that He is near you now. Cherish that feeling. Encourage it. Let the thought of your Father's presence bring you comfort and help.

If you are not such an one, if you have been

careless about God, or even worse—yet He is so kind and merciful that He comes to you now. He is not far off. He cares for you. Seek Him. Draw near to Him in heart. You have One who pleads for you, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. Unworthy as you are, and much as you have neglected Him, God, for His dear Son's sake, will hear and bless you now. Thus you too may think with comfort that God is near, for He is a pardoning God, ready to receive all who come to Him by Jesus Christ.

Our Lord's disciples forsook Him and fled. He knew that they would. And then He was left alone amid His enemies. But He said, "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Your friends do not forsake you. They leave you alone for your good, that you may be quiet; the moment you want anything, somebody will come. Friends are near you, not enemies. Thus the servant fares much better than the Master did. But still you may humbly say with Him, "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." It is a blessed loneliness, when He is with us. It is the best of company,

when we can hold communion with Him by the Spirit.

Here are some words of Scripture besides, for you to dwell on :

“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.” Ps. iv. 4.

“When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.” Ps. xxvii. 8.

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” John xiv. 18.

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” 1 Pet. v. 7.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John i. 3.

Prayer.

O God, heavenly Father, in this quiet hour I lift up my heart to Thee. Help me by thy Spirit to draw near to Thee, and hold communion with Thee.

How great is Thy goodness in letting me come to Thee, and speak to Thee! How kind and condescending art Thou in caring for and visiting one so unworthy!

Though I am alone, yet am I not alone, because Thou art with me. Give me grace to feel this always, whenever I am left by myself. May it be my happiness, that Thou art about my path and about my bed. Oh, be so now and evermore. Suffer me not to go astray from Thee, and lose Thy presence. Uphold and preserve me. Prepare me in this quiet time for all that may come to me when I get about again.

Forgive me for all past carelessness. How much have I neglected and forgotten Thee! And yet Thou hast not forgotten me. Blot out all my transgressions in my Saviour's blood. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Give me true repentance. Give me faith. Give me an earnest desire to serve and please Thee henceforth. Renew me by Thy Holy Spirit. O gracious Father, now, alone with Thee, with none but Thee near, I beseech Thee to hear and bless me for my Saviour's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER VI.

LOOKING BACK.

WHEN you were strong and well, perhaps you did not often look back, and think of the past. You were busy from morning till night, and had (as you thought) no time to pause and consider and remember. Yet we should never be too busy to do what God bids us do; and He bids us *remember* the way by which He has led us.

This is what He said to the children of Israel by Moses, when they had come through the wilderness: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness." They were to think of God's dealings with them, and of their behaviour towards God. And so are *you*. And especially at this time. For now, at least, you *can*. God has brought you to a stand; and

when God brings us to a stand, He means us especially to remember our ways.

I do not know how old you are. Like the children of Israel, you may have *forty* years to look back upon ; or you may have less—thirty, perhaps—or maybe only twenty. Whatever the number of your years may be, God has been leading you all the while ; and all the while you have been behaving to Him in one way or another. The Israelites' forty years had been spent in the *wilderness* ; and this world is like a wilderness in some respects. The Israelites, in their wilderness, had nothing but what God gave them ; they did not know the way, but He led them ; they had no food, but He gave them manna to eat, and water to drink. We too, in our journey through life, have nothing but what God gives us ; and we should not know our way if he did not lead us. He has led you, and fed you, and taken care of you all the days of your life. You never had a comfort, but He was the giver of it ; your lot in life was fixed by Him, and He has ordered it ever since.

How have you behaved towards Him ? What

sort of life has yours been up to this time? Have you loved Him, and served Him? Have you tried to do His holy will? Have you used the means of grace? Have you daily read your Bible, and thus eaten of the *manna* provided for your soul? Have you *prayed* every day in private? Has your house been a house of prayer? Supposing you to have other children, have you tried to bring them up for God?

Perhaps you have had trouble? You can remember *that* well. As you lie on your bed, past troubles readily come back to your mind; for troubles are the last things that people forget. But consider who sent your trouble, and why. God sent it; and He sent it to try you, and to do you good. "Thou shalt remember," said Moses to the children of Israel, "thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no." We should be apt to forget God, if we had nothing but prosperity; He sends trouble, to humble us, to make us

examine our hearts and think of our ways, and to draw us to Him, and incline us to keep His commandments.

Oh, how kind God has been to you! How many mercies has He sent you every day! How often has He helped you! If He has sent you trouble, yet He has helped you through it; your being as you are to-day shows that He has. And how many invitations and offers has He sent you! He has called you in the gospel; He has offered you pardon and salvation in Jesus Christ; He has promised to give you His Holy Spirit. Again and again has He given you invitations and promises, and warnings too.

If you have hitherto made a poor return, make a better now. If you have slighted His call, slight it no longer. Give Him your heart; that is what he asks for. Now, from your bed, lift up your thoughts to God by Jesus Christ, humbly and penitently, and cast yourself upon His mercy. He gave His blessed Son for you, and Jesus died to save you, and now He lives above to plead for you. He will be your *Saviour*. None that go to God by Him will ever be refused or cast out.

“Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts ;
Consider your ways.” Haggai i. 5.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the
faith ; prove your own selves.” 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

“I have seen his ways, and will heal him : I
will lead him also, and restore comforts unto
him and to his mourners.” Isa. lvii. 18.

“O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee
have had dominion over us : but by Thee only
will we make mention of Thy name.” Isa.
xxvi. 13.

“Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned ; for
Thou art the Lord my God.” Jer. xxxi. 18.

Prayer.

Yea, Lord, turn thou me by Thy grace ! Give
me thy Holy Spirit ! Humble me, soften me,
give me true repentance, help me to look in faith
to Christ my Saviour, and do Thou, for His sake,
have mercy on me and forgive me. I have too
much forgotten Thee ; I have neglected many
things ; I have been too busy about worldly
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Thee such poor returns. O Lord, I thank Thee for sparing me hitherto. And now, I beseech Thee, renew me by Thy Holy Spirit, and show me Thy loving favour, and speak peace to me, and grant me grace to love and serve Thee henceforth with all my heart, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER VII.

LOW SPIRITS.

WHEN the body is weak, the spirits are often low. Perhaps you have found it so ; perhaps you are finding it so now.

Whether there be any particular thing or not to make you low, you *are* low. You could hardly give an account of your feelings, you would find it difficult to say what is the matter ; yet you have a weight on your mind, you are cast down, desponding thoughts come—you know not whence—and you are often ready to cry. Nay, sometimes when you are alone, the tears will come, and you cannot help it.

You would be ashamed to let anybody see them. People would perhaps be vexed with you, and call you foolish. Even those who love you and are kind to you might not be able to

understand your feelings. But God is not angry with you, He understands what you feel; nay, He sympathises with you, feels for you, and looks down on you with loving compassion.

Do you remember a *prayer* about tears? It is this: "Put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" Ps. lvi. 8. That is what David said to God, when he was in great trouble and fear. What did he mean? He meant to ask God to take notice of his tears, and pay attention to his sorrow, and remember his sad state, and send him relief. We put into a bottle what we wish to *keep*, and we write in a book what we want to remember. That is what David prayed God to do: to keep in mind his tears, and remember his trouble.

You may pray in the same manner. Do not give way to lowness of spirits, or indulge yourself too far in crying: but, when you feel sad, and tears will come, then take all to God, and lay your feelings before Him, beseeching Him to pay attention to you, and give you comfort. And He surely will. So to speak, He will put your tears into His bottle, and write them in His

book; for He is kind and pitiful and of tender mercy towards you.

The time will come when God will "wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Rev. xxi.

4. That time will come to *you*, if you are truly His—if you seek Him now by Jesus Christ, and believe with the heart, and trust and love and serve Him. Then all this will be true of you; all your tears will be wiped away by God Himself, and you will never again have sorrow or pain.

Think of that. Think of it now, in your lowness of spirits, while tears are so ready to flow. Think what God will do for you hereafter. The very thought will help and comfort you.

He who will then wipe away your tears is even now watching over you for good. If He does not yet wipe all your tears away, He will take all bitterness from your weeping; if He does not at present remove all sorrow and pain, He will surely revive your heart by His Word and Spirit, and comfort you both in mind and body.

Lift up your heart to Him. Cry to Him out of the depths. When your heart is wounded within you, then remember Him, think of your Saviour ever living for you, think of His words and His love and His promises ; think of what He said about the Comforter, the Holy Spirit—that He should come and abide with you. Pray for the Spirit.

God may be pleased to try you for a while with low spirits ; while you are weak in body, your mind and feelings may suffer too ; but He will not let this last. This lowness will pass away, things will look brighter again. “ Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” The time will come when you will thankfully say, “ Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.” “ They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

Here is another comforting text : “ I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” Ps. cxxi. 1, 2. Do you the same ; lift up your eyes unto the

hills; lift them up unto the Lord, Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty. Seek help from *Him*, the help that you need *now*. He will give it you. He can, and He will.

And here is another text: "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path." Ps. cxlii. 3. That is true of *you*; God knows your path, your present state: pour out your complaint before Him, show before Him your trouble.

Prayer.

O Lord my God, who knowest my path, and every feeling that I have, graciously send me comfort now. I am feeble and sore smitten; my heart within me is desolate; I am so feeble that I cannot speak: but all my desire is before Thee. Oh, hear me, and help me, for Thy mercies' sake.

Keep me from mistrusting Thee. Let not my faith fail. O Thou who art the God of hope, give me hope. O God of peace, grant me Thy peace. Fix my thoughts on Thee. Restore to me the light of Thy countenance, and the joy of

thy salvation. Strengthen me against desponding thoughts; may the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, comfort me now; make me to hear joy and gladness.

Hear me, O Lord my God, for Jesus Christ my Saviour's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER VIII.

COME.

A POOR woman once said that the word she loved best in all the Bible was the word "Come." But then the word was more than a word to her, for it expressed what she had actually done; she *had* come. She had taken the word as an invitation, and she had accepted the invitation; and so she loved the very word, because it was the word which had brought her to her Saviour.

It is He who said "Come unto me:" not merely "Come," but "Come unto *me*." He spoke the words, and they were written in the Bible, and there they are still for us to read. Thus the same gracious Saviour calls *us*. He says to you, "Come unto me!"

But at present you cannot move; you are to

lie quite still. Others must come to you, you cannot go to them. Nevertheless you can do *this*. Just as you are, you can obey this call. Even while you are lying on your bed, and must not stir, you can come to Jesus; and He bids you come, now, without waiting till you are stronger, without waiting for anything.

For this coming is a coming with the *heart*. It is your heart that He calls to—your heart and mind and will—when He says, “Come unto me !” Your *heart* can come to Him, even while your body cannot stir.

“ But are you sure He bids *me* come ? ” Yes ; for He says, “ All ye that labour and are heavy-laden.” He means all who labour under any burden—the burden of *sin*, the burden of trouble, the burden of care, the burden of sorrow—all who are tired, all whose conscience is ill at ease, all who are not at peace. He says to all such, “ Come unto me ! ”

Are not *you* such an one ? Then He says to *you*, “ Come unto me.” He must mean you, for He leaves out none ; He speaks to *all* such, and you are one of them.

But we do not in general bestir ourselves to go to any one, but for some good. "Come" is a word of *invitation*; it usually means, "Come; and I will do something for you, I will give you something." What does *this* invitation mean, "Come unto *me*"? What will Jesus give? He tells us. "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you *rest*." Now, rest is just what you want: rest from an uneasy conscience, rest from a feeling of guilt and sin, rest from sorrow and trouble and care: pardon, and peace, and rest are what you want: for there must be *pardon* first; and when He says, "Come unto me," He does in fact invite you to come and be *forgiven*, and so to find rest.

He goes on thus: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. xi. 29, 30.

He calls you to *serve* Him; but His yoke is easy: have you found the yoke of *sin* easy? He calls you to carry a *burden*; in another place He bids you take up your cross, and follow Him;

but oh, what a light and pleasant burden, compared with the load of a guilty conscience, and the burden of a godless life! His service is perfect freedom; a service of faith and trust, of gratitude and love.

“Ye shall find rest unto your *souls*.” Rest for the tired body is sweet, but rest for the weary soul is far better. This is what He promises. The body may still suffer; but Jesus will give rest to the soul. And rest and peace in the soul will give much comfort even to a weak and suffering body.

Come then to this gracious and loving Saviour, who calls you so kindly, and promises you so much. Come to Him at once, without delay. Come, just as you are; not waiting till you are more fit to come; not stopping, as you might do if called into the presence of the Queen, to put on your best clothes. He, and He alone, can take away your filthy garments, and clothe you in white; He alone can wash you, and make you clean. Come to Him. He promises much, but He always gives what He says. And what He gives, He gives *freely*. You can make no amends,

you have nothing to pay, but He will forgive you all. You have but one thing to do, and that is to *come*. "Come unto me!" He says.

Here are other gracious words of the same sort :

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isa. lv. 1.

But alas! our Lord complained that those whom He called would not come: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John v. 40. Oh, be not you like them! Do not lose *life* by not coming.

Look also at these texts :

"And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus." Mark x. 50.

"And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. . . . And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Luke vii. 48, 50.

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And He answered and spake unto those that stood before Him, saying, Take away the filthy garments

from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zech. iii. 3, 4.

" Mine iniquities are gone over mine head ; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Ps. xxxviii. 4. " Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Ps. lv. 22.

" These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world." John xvi. 33.

Prayer.

Lord, I hear Thy gracious word, " Come unto me." Oh, help me to come ; help me by Thy Holy Spirit ; incline my heart to come. I am weary of sin, I earnestly desire pardon and peace, I wish to serve Thee and follow Thee. Let me not be like those who would not come. May I cast away every hindrance, and come to Thee.

I am not worthy to come, for I am a sinful

creature. But Thou didst come to seek and to save that which was lost; therefore do Thou graciously receive and save *me*.

O God, heavenly Father, deliver me from hardness of heart; let me not forget this gracious invitation; impress it on my heart by Thy Spirit. Now, while I hear my Saviour's words, give me grace at once to believe and obey.

Forgive my sins, take away all my iniquity, grant me peace, let me find rest in Christ my Saviour.

Hear me for His sake. Amen.



CHAPTER IX.

ANXIOUS THOUGHTS.

PERHAPS you do not sleep well now, perhaps you lie awake a good deal. At such times anxious thoughts are apt to come. I daresay you find it so. One thing after another comes into your mind, to trouble you. Everything looks black. You cannot help going over things in your mind again and again. You wish you could get off to sleep, but you cannot. Sleeplessness brings restless thoughts, and then the restless thoughts keep you from sleep. And so you lie, hour after hour.

But things will look brighter in the morning. Daylight makes a wonderful difference. When it is day, and people are about again, many of these thoughts will prove to have been no more than fancies. Try to think this at the time.

Further, think of a *text*, and fix your mind

upon it: such a text as this, for instance, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Pet. v. 7); or this, "Be careful for nothing"—be anxious about nothing—for that is what it means. Get hold of such words, and dwell upon them, and apply them to yourself: you will find this a great help against anxious thoughts at night.

But that last text leads us on to something else, which is the greatest help of all—that is, *prayer*. For the passage goes on thus, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

This is very plain. Here you are told what to do, instead of being anxious. When anxious thoughts come, do not give way to them, but rather lift up your heart to God in prayer. Do it at once, while you lie on your bed; and do it about *all* the thoughts, whatever they may be. Pray for help against them, make your supplica-

tions to God with regard to the very things that trouble your mind; *thank* God for His goodness to you ; keep nothing back from Him, pour out your heart before Him, make all your requests known to Him. This is what He Himself bids you do, instead of giving way to anxiety.

This is like the doctor coming into your room, and listening to what you say about your aches and pains, and then telling you what to do, and giving you medicine to cure them. The Great Physician here comes and speaks to you, and tells you what means to use, and whom to apply to. You are to apply to *Him*; the remedy you are to use is *prayer*. As the doctor, who watches your case, makes changes in your medicine, so as to suit you at different times, so the Great Physician puts four things into His prescription—prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, and requests or petitions. They may all be used at once, or they may be used one at a time, for there is some little difference in them. But they are all good and wholesome; they are the Great Physician's own medicine, to do you good, and give you ease.

Further, He *promises* this medicine shall succeed. This is what no doctor can do, with all his skill. But God can make His medicine work a cure. And He will; for He says that if you do thus pray, then the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus. Instead of anxiety, He will give you peace. And this peace, He says, shall *keep* your heart and mind; keep it, as a garrison of soldiers keeps a fort, guarding it, and preventing the enemy from getting in. So the peace of God shall guard your heart—both filling it, and keeping out anxiety.

You will find *peace* to be a far better companion than *anxiety*, as you lie sleepless. Nay, many to whom God has given this peace have found it by no means an unhappy thing to lie awake. It “passeth all understanding.” It is something far better than we can think; and it has this wonderful power, that it can make the mind at ease even when there are real troubles, not mere fancies.

This therefore is what the Great Physician

prescribes for your case : He bids you *pray*. He will do His part, if you will do yours. If you ask, He will give. If you use the means, He will work the cure. It is a wonderful gift—"the peace of God!"

Prayer.

O God, give me, I beseech Thee, this great and precious gift, give me Thy *peace*. Help me, by the Holy Spirit, to put away anxious thoughts, and to cast all my care upon Thee. Help me even now to pray. May Thy Holy Spirit now, and at all times, help my infirmities in prayer, and enable me to approach Thee by Jesus Christ, my Saviour, my Mediator and Advocate, and to come to Thee in *faith*.

I thank Thee for all Thy goodness. Make me more thankful. Teach me to count up my mercies. Give me grateful and trustful thoughts. I can trace Thy loving care in all Thy past dealings; oh, help me to believe that Thou still carest for me, unworthy as I am, and that Thou wilt care for me always.

Heavenly Father, I commit all my concerns into Thy hands. All that troubles me I humbly

lay before Thee. Thou orderest all things ; nothing can happen to me without Thee ; and Thou art all-wise, and almighty, and all-loving. Thou knowest what is best for me ; graciously send it to me. Thou knowest my true need far better than I know it ; be pleased to deal with me accordingly ; and make me always content and thankful.

Hear me for my Saviour's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER X.

A TRUST FROM GOD.

WHEN Pharaoh's daughter gave the infant Moses into the charge of his own mother, not knowing that she was his mother, she said to her, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." Ex. i. 9. God has now given an infant into *your* charge—your own child—and what Pharaoh's daughter said to that mother now applies to you: you are to take your child as from God's hand, and nurse it for Him; and He will repay you.

It is *your* child, and yet it is a trust from God. You are not to do just what you please with that dear little one; God puts you in charge of it; you are to bring it up for Him.

No other woman has half so much to do with that child as you have—no, not a tenth part so

much. Other women may come in and make their remarks upon it, and call it "a little dear," and say which it is most like—father, or mother—and so forth; but you *love* the child, for it is your very own, God's gift to you. But yet He gives it to you as a *trust*. Other women are trusted with other children; this one God trusts *you* with.

Look at it. It does not yet know you; yet nature teaches it to nestle at your side, and it will know you before it knows any one else. And nature teaches you to take it and nurse it. But nature does *not* teach you to nurse it for GOD. That is a teaching beyond the teaching of nature. God himself bids you do that. Look at your child in that light. Think thus with yourself—"Here is a precious charge from God; I am to take care of my child for Him; I am to nurse it for Him, to bring it up for Him, to answer for it to Him."

Moses' mother was to begin her work at once, from the moment when the child was put into her hands. So are you. From its very birth you are to bring this child up for God. It will



soon begin to notice ; and you are the person it will notice first, and notice most. As it grows and grows, it will see what you do, and hear what you say. It will learn from you, and copy you. If it sees you do wrong things, and hears you say wrong words, it will copy you in them. It will begin to do so before you are aware. A child soon begins to copy its mother. A mother is a child's earliest teacher.

Oh, teach your child aright. Teach it by word, as soon as it can learn. Evil it is sure to see and hear : be beforehand with evil ; teach your child what is *good*, teach it about God and His love, teach it about the Lord Jesus Christ, teach it about holiness and sin, and about prayer and the Bible, and about the Holy Spirit. Sow the seed. Begin early.

Teach it by example ; set it a copy ; be yourself its copy. Be watchful ; for little eyes are sharp, and little ears are quick of hearing. Never say a word you would be sorry that your child should say. Never do anything you would not wish it to do.

Set God always before you with regard to this

child. Bring it up for Him ; that it may truly and always be *His* child.

Pharaoh's daughter promised a reward, "I will give thee thy wages." God will give you a reward too. If your child grows up to be a good and dutiful child, will not that be a reward? If this son or daughter grow to be a good man or woman, will not that be a reward? If, in your old age, this child in its turn nurse *you*, and love you, and care for you, and comfort you, will not that be a reward?

Such are some of the rewards which God gives to those who bring up their children for Him. And further, He *helps* them to do it. And, besides all this, He will hear your prayers, and bless your teaching and example. And, when you meet your child before His face, and are with your child for ever in heaven, will not *that* be a reward?

Here are some texts about parents and children:

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6.

"For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him : therefore also I have lent [or returned] him to the Lord ; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." 1 Sam. i. 27, 28.

Jesus said, " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God." Luke xviii. 16. That was said when women brought their children to Him. He loves mothers to do so.

"And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephes. vi. 4. So writes St. Paul to fathers ; but mothers are included.

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice ; and I am persuaded that in thee also." 2 Tim. i. 5. "Knowing of whom thou hast learned them ; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15. His mother Eunice

had taught Timothy in the Bible from a child, nay, from an *infant*, and perhaps his grandmother Lois had helped ; and God had blest their teaching, and made Timothy a man of faith. This was their reward.

Prayer.

Heavenly Father, help me to bring up this little one aright. Thou hast placed it in my charge, and I do desire to be a good mother to my child, and a faithful servant and steward to Thee. But I am weak and ignorant, and I want Thy help. Oh, do Thou guide and strengthen me. Give me grace to teach my child rightly, and to set it a good example. May this little one never learn anything wrong from me, but only what is pure and holy and right and good. Make me watchful over my temper and words and actions. From the very first, help me to train this child for Thee.

Graciously bless my child, and bless me. Make this dear little one to be a joy to me, and not a grief. Give me the happiness of seeing my child grow up in Thy faith and fear and love.

Keep my child from sin. Preserve it from the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Lord, I humbly bring my child to Thee : graciously take it in the arms of Thy mercy, and bless it ; bless it with Thy Holy Spirit ; bless it now, and bless it evermore, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER XI.

THE COMFORTER.

WHEN our Saviour was going away, He promised His disciples to send them another Comforter, who should stay with them always. Accordingly the Holy Spirit came, and did stay with them. It was He who comforted them under the loss of their Master ; it was He who made Peter and the rest so bold ; it was He who gave them words to speak, and caused their words to take effect on the hearts of those who heard them ; it was He who made the Apostles able to do many wonderful works.

Our Lord said that the Comforter should *stay*. He meant, not only that He should stay with the Apostles while they lived, but also that He should stay with Christians afterwards. And so He does. The Holy Spirit is still sent. Still He comes into our hearts, and makes His abode

there, and changes us, and comforts us, and guides and strengthens and sanctifies us. Every good thought comes from Him ; He gives us strength against sin ; He shows us the meaning of Scripture, and brings it home to our hearts ; He sets us against what is wrong, and inclines us to what is right ; He gives us repentance and faith, and leads us to trust in our Saviour and to love God. He helps us to *pray*.

He Himself comes to us in answer to prayer. We are to *pray* for the Spirit ; and our Saviour said He would pray the Father to send Him to us ; and God *promises* to send Him.

You have a good and happy time now for praying for the Spirit. You lie so still, you are so much alone. This is just the time for quiet, secret prayer for the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to come and make His abode in your heart. Ask Him to. Ask it in the name of Jesus Christ your Saviour, and for His sake. Ask it in *faith*.

Pray for yourself, and pray for your family, and especially for the little one lying beside you. Pray that the Holy Spirit may be given to you all. His dwelling-place is the *heart* ; ask that

He may dwell in your heart, and in your husband's heart, and in the heart of each of your children ; pray that, even now, He may come and make His abode in your infant's heart ; pray the same when you take your child to be baptised ; pray that the Holy Spirit may always stay with your child.

The Holy Spirit is unseen. When God grants your prayer, and the Spirit comes, you will *see* no one. But you cannot see the *wind*, and yet how powerful it is—at one time blowing softly, at another shaking the house, and scattering the leaves, and breaking the branches ! So does the Spirit of God act on the heart—now gently, and now powerfully—convincing, changing, moving, comforting, soothing, according as He sees the heart to need.

Pray that the Spirit may be given you *now*. Ask for a *present* blessing. This time of retirement may prove the best and happiest time in all your life, if you seek the Spirit more earnestly than ever, and He come in His sanctifying grace to you and yours, and stay with you always. How happy that will be for you all !

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John iii. 8.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. . . . If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Luke xi. 9-13.

"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth." John xiv. 16.
"He shall teach you all things." Ver. 26.

Prayer.

O God, heavenly Father, give me Thy Holy Spirit, the Comforter, that He may be my teacher, and guide me into all truth. May the Comforter come to me now, and, unworthy as I am, may He take up His abode in my heart, and

abide with me always in His sanctifying power and grace. Heavenly Father, according to my Saviour's promise, and for His sake, give Thy Holy Spirit to me who ask.

I pray for myself, and I pray for all dear to me. Bless my husband and my children ; may Thy Holy Spirit be given to them also, to each one of them. And give Thy Spirit to this little one. Now, while he lies beside me, before he goes out into the world, and knows of sin, oh, do Thou be gracious to him, and grant to him Thy Holy Spirit. Soon I hope to bring him to Thee in baptism ; Lord, be pleased to receive and bless him, and to give him a new heart, and to baptise him with Thy Spirit indeed.

Hear me, I beseech Thee, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.



CHAPTER XII.

GETTING ABOUT AGAIN.

YOU have had a good recovery, you are gaining strength every day, you begin now to do little things for yourself, and soon you will be getting about again. God has brought you through your pain and danger.

But now another danger meets you—the danger of forgetting God, and going back, and growing careless and worldly. Be aware of this new danger; watch and pray against it.

In your weak and helpless state, when you felt so ill, and could do nothing for yourself, then you drew near to God, and sought His help and comfort. You felt your dependence on Him, you knew that He alone could bring you through

and restore you ; and you humbled yourself before Him, and cast yourself upon Him for mercy and preservation—both soul and body.

You did not seek Him in vain. He heard your prayers. He has been gracious to you. He supported you in your time of trial, and ever since He has been doing you good—watching over you, taking care of you, and gradually restoring your strength.

Do not forget Him. Do not go back from Him. Do not leave off praying to Him, and trusting in Him. Live as near to Him in health and strength as you did in weakness. Serve Him with the new strength which He gives you. It is He who has raised you up to life again ; give your heart and life to Him, who has preserved and saved and redeemed you. Show Him how grateful you are to Him. Show it, not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

Many things will now have to be thought of, and seen about ; for you will soon get back into your usual life. People will come about you again, and you will mix with your neighbours, and so forth ; your quiet time is coming to an

end. But do not let the blessing of it come to an end. Be on your guard lest these things and these people come between you and God. They need not. Health and strength are His gift, and may be used in His service ; and so may our intercourse with others. Few of us are put to live always shut up in a sick-room ; most are appointed by God to live in families and among neighbours, to be busy, to lead an active life in some way or another. And just in the lot which God has appointed for us, just in that lot it is that we are to serve Him, and do His will, and seek His presence, and hold communion with Him continually.

Get up therefore, and go about again, with an earnest desire to walk with God. Be aware of the temptations that will lie in your way, and meet them with prayer ; trusting, not in any strength or good resolutions of yours, but in God's promised grace. Remember, though you are getting back your bodily strength, yet you will never have any *spiritual* strength of your own. All must come from God. But He will surely give grace and guidance and strength to

those who seek Him. He can keep you from departing from Him ; He can preserve you from falling, or going astray, or backsliding ; He can make His strength perfect in your weakness ; He can, and He will, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. "Ask, and ye shall receive." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Here are some other texts for you to think of :

"When He slew them, then they sought Him ; . . . nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues ; for their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant." Ps. lxxviii. 34-37.

"Were there not *ten* cleansed ? But where are the *nine* ?" Luke xvii. 17.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the *mercies* of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service : and be not conformed to this world." Rom. xii. 1, 2.

"My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. xii. 9.

“I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not ; I will help thee.” Isa. xli. 13.

Prayer.

O Lord my God, prepare me by Thy grace once more to take my appointed place, to mix with others, and to go about my daily work. May nothing draw my heart away from Thee. May I never forget Thy goodness, or lose the sense of spiritual and eternal things. Rather, may I grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Thou knowest the temptations that will beset me, and Thou knowest that I have no strength of my own to meet them. Oh, do Thou strengthen me. Without Thy grace I should quickly become filled with worldly thoughts, and grow cold and careless towards Thee. Keep me, I beseech Thee, by Thy mighty power ; defend me from evil ; quicken me daily by Thy Spirit.

Preserve me from neglecting Thy Word, and prayer. Make me constant and diligent in using

all the means of grace. In health and strength, help me to seek first Thy Kingdom and righteousness. Oh, hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Hear me, for my Redeemer's sake. Amen.

THE END.



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